



U.S. Department of Justice
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NEWS RELEASE

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NORTHEAST KANSAS CITY, KANSAS, AREA RECOGNIZED AS OFFICIAL WEED AND SEED SITE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Kansas City, Kan. – U.S. Attorney Eric Melgren, Mayor Carol Marinovich, Commissioner Mark Mitchell, and Police Chief Ron Miller announced today that the Department of Justice, Office of Weed and Seed, has designated Northeast Kansas City, Kansas a designated Weed and Seed site.

This new Weed and Seed designated site encompasses the area bounded on the north by Parallel Parkway, on the south by Minnesota Avenue, on the east by the Kansas River, and on the west by 22nd Street. The area covers approximately two square miles with a population of approximately 5,279.

Weed and Seed is a Department of Justice two prong strategy where law enforcement agencies and prosecutors cooperate in “weeding out” crime and human services are “seeded” into the community. These seeded services focus on prevention, intervention and treatment, and neighborhood revitalization. Weed and Seed aims to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in targeted high-crime neighborhoods.

Designated Weed and Seed sites receive preference in discretionary funding from participating federal agencies; priority for participating in federally sponsored training and technical assistance; use of the Weed and Seed logo; and eligibility to apply to the Department of Justice for Weed and Seed funds.

“This is an area that already benefits from strong neighborhood groups and faith-based organizations,” Melgren said. “Weed and Seed working together with these neighborhood groups, faith-based organizations, the Kansas City, Kansas, Police Department, and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County, will have a positive impact on the quality of life in this area. I would like to recognize the leadership of Chief Ron Miller and his support of the Weed and Seed strategy.”

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The Kansas City, Kansas Police Department provides the “Weed” prong of the Weed and Seed program. Through community policing, and with the cooperation of community residents, the police department will focus on decreasing crime, including drug trafficking, in the area.

The “Seed” prong of the program supports educational and social services programs for both children and adults. The Weed and Seed Steering Committee will work with the Unified Government of Wyandotte County, neighborhood groups, faith-based organizations, and community members to implement programs to revitalize the community including neighborhood clean-ups, area revitalization, an annual community resource fair, and a welcome wagon program.

After receiving official DOJ recognition, members of the steering committee have been invited to attend the Department of Justice Application Kit Workshop/Power of Prevention Meeting in Indianapolis scheduled for July 12 -16, 2004, to receive assistance in applying for federal grant funds.

“We have seen the success of this program at Weed and Seed sites in Topeka and Wichita and I have been very committed to bringing this successful program to Kansas City, Kansas. With the invaluable help of Chief Ron Miller, and the enthusiastic support of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County, today we see that dream become a reality,” said U.S. Attorney Melgren. “This program weeds out crime and seeds in neighborhood revitalization. We look forward to seeing the same kind of success in the Northeast Kansas City, Kansas Weed and Seed site, that we have seen in other Weed and Seed locations.”

“This is a first step in a very competitive process,” said Mayor/CEO Carol Marinovich. “The Unified Government has long been committed toward the revitalization of the urban core of our community and improving the quality of life of our residents. We appreciate U.S. Attorney Eric Melgren for his efforts in our community receiving designation as a Weed and Seed site. Operation Weed and Seed has proven to be a valuable tool in the successful revitalization of urban areas around the country including Topeka and Wichita. We look forward to working with the Weed and Seed Steering Committee and the opportunity to achieve success in Kansas City, Kansas.”

“I am very excited about District 4 receiving official recognition as a Weed and Seed site,” said Commissioner Mark Mitchell. “This is a testament to people like Captain Tom McMillan, who has been instrumental in getting us this far in the process, and Community Policing Officer Ruben Rodriguez, who is an example of good policing interacting with the community. The possibility of this funding will go a great way to continue the momentum began by our active neighborhood groups, visionary community development organizations and dedicated community development staff. These efforts will add exponential growth to our urban revitalization plans and the direction of our downtown stakeholders.”

“We have worked diligently to acquire Official Recognition status with the Office of Weed and Seed,” said Chief Ron Miller. “Kansas City KS has already seen a significant decline in overall violent crime in the past several years and, as we continue that effort, we hope that the “seeding” function will improve the quality of life for our citizen partners in this effort. It is truly a partnership with the community.”

“The time has come for us to restore hope to the hopeless, help to the helpless, and prove to the community that they are not a forgotten people,” said Reverend Gregory R. Gray, Coordinator of the Urban High Crime Neighborhood Initiative.